

Perhaps the greatest single development that could occur to speed the development of the north would be the construction of railway lines to open up the area. We have seen that railways are and always have been a decisive factor to the development in Canada. Can we hope for railway lines to and in the north? I am of the opinion that sooner or later railway lines will reach into the Canadian northland and I believe it will be sooner than later.

I am not, I can assure you, urging a spree of railroad building in northern Canada. I am merely placing the situation before you and trying to show what problems we have ahead of us. The solution of these problems when the appropriate time comes will, in my opinion, best be achieved by joining the initiative of private enterprise with planned government assistance, in much the same way that the construction of the trans-continental railways was accomplished.

An indication that the government is alive to the importance of the development of northern Canada was given just about a year ago, when the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources Bill was introduced in the House of Commons. In moving the Second Reading of that Bill the Prime Minister pointed out that its purpose was to emphasize the fact that the people of Canada are greatly interested in the northern regions and regard them as an important part of the area which is subject to the sovereignty of the Canadian nation. One of the responsibilities given to my Department by this new legislation, which received Royal Assent on December 16, 1953, is to promote measures for the further economic and political development of the Northwest Territories and Yukon Territory, and to foster, through scientific investigation and technology, knowledge of the Canadian north and of the means of dealing with conditions related to its further development.

I wish to express the fervent hope that all of us who are concerned with the problems of northern Canada -- workers and technicians, scientists and engineers, business executives and financiers, and government officials -- will, when the occasion arises, show the same degree of vision, the same courage and far-sighted wisdom and the same determination to back our judgments with our wealth and our reputations as did our predecessors in the great days of the early development of Canada. There are some who say that the spirit of adventure is well-nigh dead in this country, that it has been killed by the urge for security. With these people I profoundly disagree. There is abundant evidence in our postwar economic progress, at almost any point where you care to look, that Canadians still retain the courage and the sense of adventure of their forefathers. And if there is one single fact that is calculated to keep this spirit alive, it is the call of our Northern frontier.

May I conclude by quoting from a speech which Sir Wilfrid Laurier made in the House of Commons, in 1904.

"To those who urge upon us the policy of tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow, to those who tell us, wait, wait, wait; to those who advise us to pause, to consider, to reflect, to calculate